

Diabetes Self-Management: Keep Your Vaccines Up to Date

People with diabetes are at greater risk for infection. Once ill, the person with diabetes can become very sick, stay sicker longer and even die as a result of an infection. Despite this fact, many people with diabetes do not keep their immunizations current that could prevent illness.

Heavy rains and flooding can create sources of infection. Standing water and wet materials allow viruses, bacteria and mold to breed. Tetanus, which is an organism found in the soil, is easily carried by water. Tetanus causes lockjaw and can be fatal but a vaccine is available.

Talk with your health care provider and update your immunizations. At the least, people with diabetes should get the anti-flu vaccine each year; tetanus booster once every ten years; and a pneumonia vaccine once in a lifetime. Keeping vaccines up-to-date can prevent unwanted illness.

After a Flood

People with diabetes must be careful to avoid exposure to infection after a flood.

Be safe. Never enter a flooded area without verifying that gas and electricity have been turned off. Open doors and windows for better ventilation. Wear boots, gloves and protective eyewear to reduce the risk of exposure to germs.

Hygiene. Frequently wash your hands with clean water especially before touching your face or your food. Do not use cooking utensils that have been exposed to standing water without

first cleaning them. If the safety of any food or beverage is in question, discard it.

Cleaning Up. Cleaning items exposed to floodwater is necessary to avoid problems with mold and other germs. This includes the walls and floor. If something cannot be disinfected or completely dried, it is best to discard the item. Examples include carpeting or bedding.

If you do the cleanup yourself, be sure the cleaning product has the words “disinfectant” on the label. Bleach is a common disinfectant. Do not mix bleach with cleaners that contain ammonia. During cleanup, always wear shoes; a mask; and protective eyewear.

Being Prepared for an Emergency

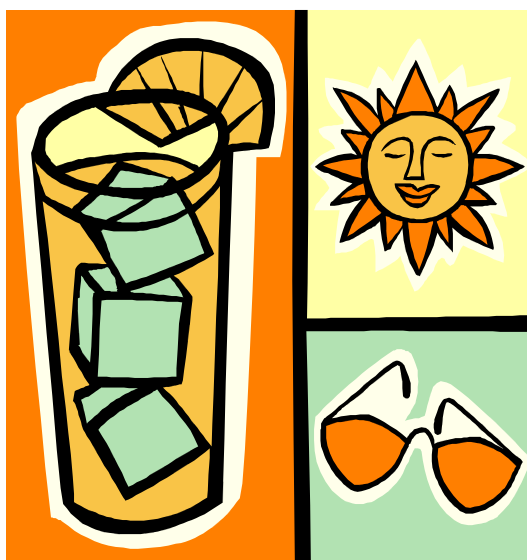
It is hurricane season and a good time to update your emergency kit. Packaged, dried or canned foods and commercially prepared water should be replaced if not used within one year.

Check the expiration dates on first aid supplies. Be sure that your battery operated flashlights, radios and other tools are working.

If you have diabetes, wear identification at all times. During the emergency

- Maintain your meal plan to the best of your ability.
- Monitor your blood sugar. Stress and exertion can alter your blood sugar.
- Carry a fast source of glucose.
- Check your feet daily.

If you become ill, or you are out of medication or food, go the nearest hospital, or contact the police or the American Red Cross.



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Immunizations

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Flood Cleanup and Emergency Preparedness

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Food and Water in an Emergency. Joint American Red Cross and FEMA publication 477. August 2004. You can obtain a copy of this and other emergency preparedness publications by calling either:

FEMA: 1-800-480-2520 or www.fema.gov or American Red Cross (local Maryland Chapter) 410-624-2000 or www.redcross-cmd.org.

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This news page is a product of the Maryland Diabetes Prevention and Control Program. The intent is to provide ongoing news and information about diabetes for the public, especially people with diabetes and their families.

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